Love one another: 38

A TVB LECTVRE,

PREACHED

At Watford in Hartfordshire at a Conventicle on the 25. of *December* last, being Christmas day, by JOHN ALEXANDER, a Joyner.

His text was taken out of the Epistle of Saint *Iohn*, and himselfe was taken by Captaine *Bird*, Lieutenant *Rock*, and other officers, from whom he received such usage as his doctrine did deserve; for which the said officers were commended by the Parliament.

Jan: 23 Printed in the yeare of private instructing. 1642

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BEloved, you are well met in this ſolemn Synagogue to hear from me thoſe words of Truth, and wholeſome Doctrine which this day you ſhall receive from me your teacher. And you are to underſtand, that although I have had but ſix ſhillings at a collection for my other Sermons, which like good ſeed I have ſowed among you, and the fruits thereof in a plentifull increaſe to your great advantage you have reaped, for this Sermon I ſhall well deſerve twelve ſhillings, both for the ſolemneſſe of the day, and the ſweetneſſe of the Doctrine that floweth from my Text, and the gravity, and Authority of me your Teacher, I will diſpenſe a little (with your Chriſtian patience) with the two firſt reaſons, or inducements, and begin firſt with the laſt, which is the ſufficiency of your Teacher.

And what man indeed more fitting to direct your underſtanding in this point, then I, who am your known, your deare, your perſecuted *Alexander*? whoſe life you have ſeen, whoſe Doctrine you have heard, & whoſe zeal for the holy Cauſe you have admired. This is not the firſt time you have heard of my prayſes, nor ſhall it be the laſt. To whom is it more ſutable to diſcourſe upon this Text of Love, then unto me, who by profeſſion am a Joyner a man ordained to joyne and ſettle things in order? and if the husband of the Virgin *Mary* (as the Text ſaith) was but a Carpenter, I believe a Joyner is not to be deſpiſed. A Carpenter Beloved doth make Seats or formes in the Houſe of God, but it is the office of a Joyner to make the Pulpit, but when the Joyner doth not onely make the Pulpit, but it is the Preacher that is in the Pulpit, who joyneth Truth to Falſhood, Ignorance unto Knowledge, and Miſdevotion unto Zeal, What a Joyner, or what a Conjoiner muſt that be? and this Beloved, is the happineſſe which you all behold, and injoy in me this day: and ſo much briefly for my ſelf, who am your Teacher, I will now return unto my firſt particular which is the ſolemneſſe of the day.

And I would desire you in the first place not to conceive of me to be so superstitious, as to make any conscience of the solemnity of this day, because the Church hath ordained or doth enjoyn, no God forbid I should be so prophane, it is a detestation of their blindnesse, that have brought me hither this day, to enlighten your eyes, and to informe your cares, how much they are abused, and doe abuse the ignorant, and a conscionsnesse withall of my present wants, which crave a supply from your Christian charities to relieve them: and in the first place, I give you to understand, that the very name of *Christmas* is Idolatrous and prophane, and so verily, are the whole twelve dayes wherein the wicked make many daily, and nightly sacrifices to Riot, and sensuality. The Papists *Christmas* (pardon me, Beloved that I am forced to repeat the word) doth begin in *Holland* ten dayes before it doth in *England*, for so I have been informed by a godly brother from *Amsterdam*, wherein they make more haste then good speed, and in their doing so, three things offer themselves to our observation.

There are three sorts of men that make haste.

The first that make more haste then good speed.

The second those that make haste with good speed.

The third those that make neither haste, nor good speed, of these in their order, and first of the first.

They that make more haste then good speed, those I say, are the Popish and the Idolatrous Churches that in their Superstitious Rites, and Ceremonies follow them, and this indeed is the way of all sinners, and Reprobates whatsoever; thus in the Gunpowder-Treason they made more haste then good speed. Thus *Guido Faux* that limb of the Devill with his dark lanthorn which was another limb of the Devill, for every work of darknesse is a limb of the Devill, made more haste then good speed. Thus the Earle of *Newcastle* at this present with his Papisticall Army, makes more haste then good speed, to overthrow our *Ierusalem*, and to root out the true Reformed Religion from amongst us, but God I hope will put a bridle in his mouth, and send him back the way he came, or send him to those whose battells he fights, whither yet he never came.

The second sort of those that make haste, are they that make haste with good speed, and those Beloved, (with teares of joy I speak it) are yourselves, who are met all together to heare me this day: Thus the Prodigall

makes haſt with good ſpeed to diſcharge the Uſurer before the uſe of his money doth eate into his acres, and leaves him, and his poſterity deſolate. The third ſort of thoſe that make haſte, are they who neither make haſte, nor good ſpeed, And theſe Beloved, (Let it not trouble your patience, for I muſt needs ſpeak the truth) are our careleſſe ſervants at home I am afraid now, who while our pots are boyling over, make no haſte, till all the fat is fallen into the fire. Thus the fooliſh Virgins would put no oyle into their Lampes, untill overtaken by the Bridegroome, they were refuſed as unſerviceable. Aud thus the ſlothfull in the Proverbs, deferreth his travell from day untill at the laſt he is inforced to goe in the rain, and not able in it either to make haſte or good ſpeed, is throwſed to the skinne. And thus I have done with my three obſervations occaſioned on my meitation of my firſt inducement which was the ſolemnes of the day, I now come unto the ſecond, which is the ſweetneſſe of the Doctrine that is flowing from my Text.

My Text you heare is *Love*, a very neceſſary Text in theſe contentious times, whenever we our ſelves are troubled, are perſecuted, and routed in our Synagogues, when we cannot have thoſe expoſitions, and preachings with that priviledge and ſecurity as becometh us, when the Reprobate and prophane intrude themſelves into our aſſembly, and catch at our words to make us or odious, or ridiculous. When our feaſtings are made the admiration of the gluttons, and our Graces thought longer then the Prayers of the Liturgy-mongers, when our honeſt deſires of competency in wealth is accounted coveteouſneſſe, and the cloſeneſſe, and wiſdome of our carriages paſſeth for hypocriſie. Brethren, and Siſters, theſe are the laſt dayes, into which we are fallen, and it behoveth us, (mark what I ſay) to be as wiſe as Serpents, and becauſe we are purſued, derided and traduced, (though if all things ſucceed according to our prayers) there will a ſpeedy and happy period be put unto our ſufferings and revilings, and we ſhall live to revile the reviler, and to ſpit in the faces of thoſe that have oppoſed us: let us (I ſay) joyne all together in one cloſe deſire, and doe as the Text enjoynes us, *Love one another*.

The words you heare are few, yet very remarkable, if you conſider in them the drift of the Apoſtle, it is an exhortation to *Love*, wherein you ſhall find the Object, the Subject, and the Abject. The Object is *Love*, the Subject which is alſo the Abject is *one another*; I call the Subject the

Abject, because we should think our selves as Abjects in this world, and not mind it nor any thing that doth belong unto it, no more then needs must, but settle our affections altogether, on the holy Assembly of our selves, defying any sociation with the wicked and prophane: from this ariseth those two Doctrines,

First, that we must hate all those that be against us.

Secondly, that the best way to love one another, is to Love our selves first.

First we must hate all those that be against us, for how can we love our selves, unlesse we hate our enemies? how can Peace be setled in a Kingdome, unlesse all that seek to destroy it be utterly consumed? how can the pure light of the Gospell shine, as long as the thick night of Superstition and those monstrous rags of *Rome*, the Rites, and Idolatrous Ceremonies of our Church, which the proud Prelates doe put on, and practise: They are the hay, chaffe, and the stubble of Antichrist, which the breath of Reformation shall blow away, and scatter in the desarts, where there shall be none to seek it out. We must beare a perfect hate to those men and to their Arts: If we will Love one another. We must hate the Bishops as Hell, and the Prelates as the flaming smoke of Brimstone that proceedeth from it. It is no matter in what they have transgressed, for they are enemies to us, and to the musick of our Assemblies, and we are bound to hate them. They hate our Love, and we doe love their hate: What though we are not learned as the Clergy, what though we are not so great Scholars as they, Let us *love one another*, and make our selves not onely one Church, but one family, and be as it were one family of *Love*. Away with all Learning, away with all immodesty, and the trampry of the Arts: the very Grammar is prophane, and instructs our children in the obscenenesse of Conjunctions copulative, and what a smell thinke you are they like to have when they come to *Tullies* Offices: Verily brethren, were that mystery of iniquity laid open to us in our mother tongue, I doe believe that the vilest jakes about this towne would not be so unsweet in the nostrills of good men, as that booke of Offices: much more may be aleadged, but I hasten to my second Use. Which serves for terrour and astonishment of heart, to all those who stile themselves by that Reprobate title of Cavaliers, whether horsemen, or footmen, or of what degree or sex soever, these be they, who tooth and naile labour to pluck up Reformation

the root, who will have their dinners, as long as ours, and their haire longer, men of no piety, nor grace at all, who outsweare the *French*, out drink the *Dutch*, out Paramour the *Turk*. Bold Sonnes of Beliall, begotten on the daughters of *Anak*. O that they were within my reach, now Beloved, with this hand, would I hurle Seas of water to overwelm them, and with this hand balls of wildfire to consume them, with this would I throw fearfullnesse, and trembling, and with this utter ruine and desolation on them, Mark what I say, and mark well what I doe. Here would I mayme them and there would I braine them: Here would I quash them, and there would I thrash them: Here would I thrum them, and there would I burn them, & quite overcome them: here would I wound them, & there would I.—O my brethren my zeal is enlarged, and me thinks I am all on a fire, which certainly at this instant would exhale me, did not your Christian patience assist me, which leads me to the third sort of men, on which we must exercise our hate, and in the first place I beseech you,

Looke not my beloved, so amased and distractedly on one another, for I will speake unto you in a softer tone, and in the voice of gentlenesse. There be a third sort of men, I say, who live amongst us yet are not of us, nay they are rather directly against us, and they are they who inveigh against our assemblies, deride the purity of our doctrine, and scorne our instructions, of these we ought to be more wary, the more slily they carry themselves amongst us, and the neerer they are unto us they will prove more dangerous.

As he was preaching this, Captaine *Bird* and one *Eeles* his quartermaster were with some others at the outside of the house where this congregation was assembled, and overheard this doctrine, and with some impatience attended the end of this Sermon.

Beloved, wee have more ill birds I am afraid then Wren, and some fish too that are even as bad as Fish the Proctor. Beloved, there are fish known to most of this assembly by the name of Eeles: these Eeles as the gravest writers doe affirme delight in the most nethersome part of the water, or in the mudde from whence they doe proceed: Besides, they are of a slimy and slippery nature, slimy by reason of their propensnes unto the act of generation, and slippery by reason of their craft and ficklenes; this fish beloved (if we may beleeve Antiquity) hath a head and body resembling the old Serpent from whence it doth derive its subtilty, and

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instead of speaking, it hisseth. I pray God (my brethren) we have not some such fish neere us, and who sometime like the Serpent in Paradice come creeping in, even into this congregation of the Saints. Beloved, we ought I say with all care and circumspection to looke about us, and to prosecute them with the extremest hate; wherefore if any such shall attempt to circumvent us, and beare ill will unto our assemblies, let one of them be as *Anathema*, and the other as *Maranatha*. I will speake now but a word or two by the way of motive to exhort you to love one another, and so I will conclude. Doe you labour to love one another? doe you instantly and earnestly desire it? then you must love mee who am your teacher, who takes paines to informe and direct you in the right way, who do distill into your eares the doctrine of sincerity, and keepe more close unto my text then the aged man unto his chimney, or the lame man to his stilt, or the hungry man to his food: But some may here object, how may we expresse out love unto you: My brethren and sisters I will answer it briefly by enlarging your stipends and contributions to me, doe it beloved cherefully, cherefully, a cherefull giver is most excepted. You know when my sonne *Ionathan* was borne what trouble I endured, what charges I was put to because I refused to have him buried according to the superstition of the English Church, and when my daughter *Abigall* was borne, you know againe what persecutions ensued on me, because out of the tenderneese and purenes of my conscience (which I hope you all have) I would not have him Baptized at any prophane Font, which hath him corrupted with the superstitious Lyturgy of the Church of England, and made odious to all good Christians by the often figuring of the Idolatrous signe of the crosse. These troubles beloved have befalen me, and you know not how soone they may come upon your selves, wherefore deale bountifully with me who am ordained to be your example, and if you will ever love one another learne to love me in the first place, so shall the text and I and you come togetherin the end, and agree in this great and happy point of loving one another.

FINIS.

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THE MODEST VINDICATION OF HENRY VVALKER.

In answer to certaine scandalous Pamphlets, forged and vented abroad in his name (without his privity.)

Against which, as also the authours thereof, together with the popular aspersions of many other turbulent spirits, He doth protest; and before Almighty God, clear himselfe to all the world.

MAL. 3. 16.

Then spake they that feared the Lord, every one to his neighbour, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a booke of remembrance was written.

Augustin in Psal. 31. *pra.*

Unusquisque audiat, & sicut sibi conscius fuerit, ita vel doleat corrigendus, vel gaudeat approbandus.

Let every one heare, and as he is conscious to himselfe, so let him either grieve being to be corrected, or rejoyce being to be approved.

LONDON,

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1642.